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Israel Bans 'Goldfinger' Movie Because of Frobe's Nazi Past

By JAMES FERON
Special to The New York Times

JERUSALEM (Israeli See-tor), Dec. 14—"Goldfinger," one of the most popular films shown in Israel in years, was banned today because of the Nazi past of Gert Frobe, who plays the title role.

The 52-year-old German actor, whose film villainy is thwarted by James Bond, fell victim in Israel to a nine-year-old law outlawing German-made films or those including wartime Nazis.

The film version of Ian Fleming's novel of Agent 007, "Goldfinger" tells the story of a plot by the title character to take over Fort Knox.

"Goldfinger" has been seen by 227,000 Israelis during its six-week run. Scalpers have been getting \$4 to \$6 for 65-cent tickets and fights have broken out in the crush for seats.

More than one million Israelis were expected to see the film, according to its local distributors, but now it will be removed by Friday following the ban. It is currently playing in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Ramat Gan.

Gave Interview to Press

The film censorship board banned the film after Mr. Frobe gave an interview to the Paris correspondent of an Israeli newspaper, Yediot Achronot, discussing his membership in the Nazi party.

Mr. Frobe explained that he joined the party in 1929 at the age of 16, attracted by the "social platform" of the Nazis. He said he had been a passive member and that his mother had paid his dues. In any case, he related, he had helped a Jewish woman during the war.

He said he had met the woman when both were assigned to work in a hospital in Vienna in 1941. Mr. Frobe recalled that he had hidden her in his apartment for the duration to save her from persecution.

Under Israeli law, Mr. Frobe's small part in "Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines" will keep that movie from local theaters. The film, subtitled in Hebrew, is in the hands of Israeli distributors.

Plans to show "High Wind in Jamaica" another in which Mr. Frobe appears, similarly have been scrapped. The same will apply to "Is Paris Burning?" in which Mr. Frobe plays the Nazi General Dietrich von Choltitz, commandant of



Gert Frobe

18-Member Panel

The authority for the political censorship is a 1956 Cabinet decision that was accepted by the censorship board, an 18-member body of various professionals headed by a Government em-

ployee appointed by the Ministry of the Interior.

The board also censors films for sex, violence and cruelty and can ban productions de-

faming another country.

Some Israelis have expressed the view that the censorship of actors with Nazi pasts or films made by German companies becomes more difficult to justify each year.

Officials similarly will be faced in the next few days with the spectacle of Israelis fighting to get into the last performances of "Goldfinger" before it is removed.

The film censorship board is understood to have a blacklist of actors, directors and pro-

ducers. Films involving those on the list generally are not offered here, although German companies making co-productions with Austrian companies are able to have their films shown.

Frobe Calls Ban 'Stupid'

PARIS, Dec. 14. (Reuters)—Gert Frobe said tonight he was upset that Israeli censors had banned "Goldfinger."

"It is too stupid for words," he declared at his hotel here. "I've made 80 films and nobody ever bothered to ask me if I was a Nazi. If they had I would have told them straight."

Mr. Frobe said the fact appeared to have become a sensation when an interviewer asked if he would have acted in the same way as General von Choltitz, who refused Hitler's order to burn Paris.

"I was stupid," Mr. Frobe said. "Instead of giving a straightforward reply I told him a story of how, as a young member of the Nazi party, I helped a Jewish family in Vienna during the war. The fact that I helped them was proved after the war before I was allowed to start work again."

"One could understand it if I had been an officer or something. But I was nothing, an absolute nobody."

Irony Is Seen

Arnold Pickler, executive vice president of United Artists, distributors of "Goldfinger," expressed surprise last night at the action of the Israeli censorship board.

Mr. Pickler said he believed that this was the first action of its kind "at least in recent years." Other local film industry sources agreed, and noted the irony in the fact that censorship of film personalities has, until now, been practiced exclusively by Arab League countries.

"Goldfinger" went into worldwide release just a year ago and, according to a United Artists source, has grossed "close to \$15 million" in the foreign market without meeting any censorship resistance.

The Israeli market, although small, is considered one of the most lucrative per capita in the world. In 1964 American distributors earned \$2,506,000 on the release of 160 films in Israel.